

## Child and Family Well-being

Preserving family connections for children in out-of-home care and enhancing mental and physical health while maintaining educational attainment is central to our outcome of creating opportunities for children to be safe, secure, connected to kin, meeting the normal developmental challenges of childhood in a family setting.

Getting to that outcome means that we will have to focus on these specific challenges in Washington: assisting children in attaining their educational goals and meeting their educational needs; addressing the physical health and mental health needs of children; and preserving connections for children.

Responding to these challenges and to achieve our outcome, we propose the following major strategies:

- Promoting and actively seeking, engaging and initiating partnerships that will build capacity with school and community agencies to improve educational outcomes for both children in out-of-home care, and children who are receiving in-home services.
- Establishing a Parent Aide program to assist with visitation and parent/child contacts and to assist in mentoring and teaching parents' skills that will be useful in encouraging developmental strides and stronger relationships with their children. This will also include establishing and maintaining sibling and relative contact, and community ties when/where appropriate.
- Clearly articulating a role for resource parents in assisting and mentoring birth parents with building and maintaining strong relationships with their children. In order to do this well, we will communicate our expectations to resource parents that this role is valued and reinforce this role in provided training.
- Integrating Pre-Passport (formerly Kidscreen) and Passport programs will be a useful tool to gather, document and track well-being information. Using this tool and strategy will help us provide more seamless and timely services to children and families and share information with providers who are working with those children and families on goals to enhance the child's well-being.
- Providing access to appropriate mental health services and early childhood development and learning resources are crucial to a child's well-being. Collaboration and implementation of the fruits of those collaborative encounters will advance our work in this area.